THE New Republic

Anointing the Arabian With Goose Grease

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Talks With Soviet Intellectuals

By GEORGE GIBIAN

Gertrude Stein and the Nay-Sayers

By GILBERT A. HARRISON

Barrault on Broadway

By ERIC BENTLEY

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WHY DO MEN FIGHT?

An Exchange of Letters between Einstein and Freud

MARCH 18, 1957

25c

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Washington Wire

The Center of the Whirlwind

IN THE COOL Greek temple of the Supreme Court, which has a kind of coziness in its immensity—its marble columns, its immense burgundy-wine drapes, its amplifiers discreetly pretending to be Corinthian cornices—we heard the crucial Watkins case argued.

Of all the famous spots in Washington there are only two which unceasingly maintain a sense of awe and dignity and grandeur—the brooding Lincoln looking out over America from his Memorial, and the hushed Supreme Court whose quiet is, as Justice Holmes once put it, the quiet "of the center of the whirlwind."

For 20 years the House Un-American Activities committee has maintained the right of exposure for exposure's sake, the right to pillory citizens by holding them up to public contumely for reasons only tangentially connected with legislation. Now that right is challenged and the right of all similar far-ranging committees. Can the law compel John T. Watkins to be an informer on friends who were Communists back in the 40's but who have long since left the party? The point is involved in the forthcoming trial of playwright Arthur Miller, husband of Marilyn Monroe. Can the law compel a man to degrade his conscience and do what he considers to be a mean and despicable act?

Joseph Rauh, Watkins' counsel — former law clerk of Cardozo and then Frankfurter—gave what we thought was a brilliant presentation, lucid, informal, unhurried and with an undercurrent of cheerful fervor. He recalled that Watkins (since 1953 a UAW organizer) co-operated with the Communist Party, 1942-47, then broke with it and was never a party member. As Rauh explained, Watkins answered every question put by the Velde subcommittee, did not plead the 5th Amendment and replied freely concerning all acquaintances whom he believed still to be Communists at the time of the hearing (1954). But he refused to identify others who, he said, "to my best knowledge and belief have long since removed themselves from the Communist movement."

(. . . One is conscious of the great question raised by this, mused Justice Frankfurter from the bench. It is, on the face of it, an honorable motive. . . .)

The five nuns in black and white robes got up from the red upholstered public benches in the back and went out in a body. The seats were only half full. A group of Negro children came in, silent and awed. After an hour's hearing the Court abruptly recessed at 2 p.m. for a swift lunch and picked up again at 2:30. Solicitor General J. Lee Rankin, a small man with steel spectaces, almost a boy in figure, took up the prosecution. The Velde committee had a legitimate legislative purpose, he argued. Congress must get information to act knowledgeably. The Court should be reluctant to restrict Congress. "We don't think there is a right of First Amendment" (under which Watkins has pleaded). "The protection of the First Amendment is in speech." His voice was unemotional, effective.

For the Defense

AT 3:20 Rauh began rebuttal. A group of Amish young people had taken the place of the Negroes, the boys dressed normally enough, the teen-age girls all in quaint black bonnets tied under chins and plain dresses unrelieved at the necklines. Rauh spoke eagerly, trying to cover Rankin's points. He asked for a determination of legislative function. "The presumption of validity is great," he concluded, "but the presumption of innocence is greater."

Two hours were up now, and the Court quietly rustled papers and turned to the next case. The uncomprehending sightseers looked on. Hardly a word appeared in the newspapers next day. The Supreme Court is the great unreported force in Washington.

Rarely, however, does a case have the drama of this one. Besides the issue at stake there also is a personal judicial drama in the lower Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. Chief Judge Henry Edgerton, a noted liberal, and Judge David Bazelon, in a 2-to-1 decision first upheld Watkins, reversing a lower court. This did not satisfy the other six judges of Edgerton's court, however. In an unusual procedure the conservatives re-heard the case "en banc" and this time found against Watkins, 6 to 2 (and incidentally against Edgerton and Bazelon). So now comes the test, turning in large part on the original Edgerton decision written in the great tradition of Holmes, Brandeis and Cardozo: "It is very questionable whether exposure of individuals to public contempt and hostility is a 'valid legislative purpose'."

Situation Unchanged

THE WASHINGTON PICTURE as a whole hasn't changed very much. Everyone feels sorry, of course, that the President has a cold and that he will again be leaving Washington from time to time—a city from which he has been away 39 of the past 125 days or so. The next four years are a gloomy prospect with a one-party press and a part-time President in a job that taxes his endurance; a job in which incidentally, beyond any other country, we center our planning and national initiative in a crisis.

On the budget we see the extraordinary phenomenon of the chief critic of the Administration's proposals, Treasury Secretary Humphrey, remaining in the Cabinet and in effect directing the attack. Normally an Administration proposes a budget and then defends it, but in these extraordinary days Eisenhower manages to get on both sides of the question, presenting the budget and then blandly agreeing that it probably ought to be cut and why doesn't Congress cut it? The most effective criticism of this attitude is not coming from the Democrats but from conservative businessmen. If they can get their taxes reduced, they are willing to slash defense, foreign aid, schools—anything.

As to foreign affairs we are now back at about the point where we started in Suez—Britain, France and Israel out of Egypt, and Nasser thumbing his nose at us. This is a happy situation of course, and the Administration seems pleased by it. Wisdom would seem to be to confine ourselves to jobs we can manage; we are following the contrary path of taking on ever-greater jobs in ever-wider areas.

T.R.B.

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The New Republic

A JOURNAL OF OPINION

MARCH 18, 1957

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VOL. 136, No. 11, ISSUE 2207

Correspondence

► *Educating the Gifted Child*

SIRS:

HAS Arthur Bestor again caught the editors of *The New Republic* with their flag of high standards at half-mast? How else can one account for the mournful but mordant bagful of old hat in "Educating the Gifted Child" (*NR*, March 4).

The last time Bestor graced the pages of *The New Republic*, you printed some excellent criticisms, but, like *Time*, you put them in the readers' column. How about giving "equal time" to anyone of hundreds of educators who could make mincemeat out of Bestor's pedanticism. [*See next week's issue*—THE EDITORS]

The first four or five paragraphs of Bestor's article have been appearing in educational journals since 1925. That the gifted child is neglected is as platitudinous as much of the educational jargon he attacks. In the next few para-

(*Continued on page 23*)

C-H-I-N-A

SINCE Peking first invited US reporters to China last summer, the State Department has given every imaginable reason but the real one for keeping its own news curtain pulled down—the safety of the newsmen, the continued Chinese imprisonment of ten (now nine) Americans, even the indignity of Communist "blackmail." Now at long last Secretary Dulles is being a little more straightforward, even if cross-examining him continues to be, as one Senator put it, "like wrestling with a moonbeam in a dark room." At his news conference on March 5, Dulles left little doubt that the Department's newsmen-to-China ban is nothing more than a holding action against the inevitable day when we re-examine and revise our commitment to Chiang Kai-shek.

The Administration would like to find a way, said Dulles,

> . . . to satisfy better the demand for news without seeming to drop the barriers down generally, and to permit of what the Chinese Communists call "cultural exchange" . . . There is a problem as to whether or not it is possible to allow certain persons to go and other persons not to go. There are people who feel that their mission to go into all the world is just as commanding as that which impels the newspaper people.

Once newsmen go to China, warned Dulles in effect, others will plead that their cases are quite as special. Indeed, Dulles' co-religionist Rev. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary and recently retired Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, USA, said on December 10, 1956, that it is "absolutely imperative" for US and Chinese Christians to re-establish contact. Dr. Mackay called on the National Council of Churches to make the first move by asking Peking to invite a delegation of US clergy:

> There is no substitute for face-to-face encounter . . . Christian churchmen simply cannot regard as ultimate and permanently authoritative any governmental edict that would force them to accept a situation that violates their Christian conscience. Leaders in journalism may be willing to accept a ban preventing the representatives of the American press from visiting the Chinese mainland. We Christians dare not . . . so long as a visit from Christians to Christians is concerned.

After missionaries, Dulles is fair enough in assuming, would not businessmen ask for permission to sell cars and deep-freezes on the Chinese mainland? And once journalists, missionaries and businessmen go to-ing and fro-ing, is that not the beginning of the end of the trade embargo, exclusion from the UN, and non-recognition?

But if Dulles, which is also to say Chiang-minded Assistant Secretary Walter Robertson, continues to deny newsmen the right to report the news from China, the US press will only push him harder and debate

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"My, What Lovely C-H-I-N-A"

on our whole China policy will become inseparable from debate over the narrower question of freedom of the press. For this reason Dulles seeks to discourage newsmen from accepting Communist China's invitation to come and see without going so far as to take punitive criminal action against the three who accepted the invitation—Edmund Stevens and Philip Harrington of *Look* magazine and William Worthy of the *Afro-American* newspapers In the case of Stevens, the Department threatened to stamp his passport valid only for travel from his Moscow post to the United States, but in fact has backed away from its threat. More than a month has gone by since Stevens wrote the Department requesting a public hearing on the threatened action (*NR*, Feb. 18), but as of this writing the matter appears to have been quietly dropped. Worthy intends to force an early decision as a matter of principle.

The real issue, clearly, is not the ban on travel by newsmen. That will inevitably be relaxed. The issue is our China policy itself, whether it is in our national interest to go on behaving as if Communist control of the Chinese mainland can somehow be wished away. When Assistant Secretary Robertson toured the Far East last fall, Keyes Beech of the *Chicago Daily News* found him "clinging to the hope that the Chinese people will rise up to throw off their Communist yoke."

"Robertson may be right," commented Beech, "but his conviction is not supported in any way by first-hand reports from China."

The Southern Senators

HOW SERIOUS is the resurgence of isolationism in the Congress? "I am a pessimist," one Congressman said privately last week, "I'm not even sure we will vote to extend the Reciprocal Trade Agreements this year." If it is true that Congress is becoming more reluctant to use our economic strength for diplomatic ends, the reluctance is ironic, since our economic strength is not only greater than ever, but gives us—for the moment—an incontestable superiority over the Russians.

Those who fear a re-birth of isolationism call attention to the Senate votes within the past year which seem to illustrate a changed attitude. When a $4.3 billion foreign aid bill was approved by the Senate in June, 1956, Southern Democrats divided 11-11 on the issue. But when the Senate voted on March 2, 1957, on the Russell Amendment to strike out all economic assistance provisions from the Eisenhower Doctrine, 16 Southern Democrats went along with Senator Russell, including Holland and Smathers (Fla.), Scott (N.C.) and Robertson (Va.)—all of whom had voted for the '56 appropriation. "I do not believe," said Senator Russell, in explaining his vote, that "the American taxpayers . . . are quite ready to divest themselves of their wealth and have Congress appropriate money for distant projects we have never heard of, and have not discussed."

One theory that has been advanced to explain the changed Southern attitude toward foreign spending suggests that the revived Southern cry for states rights—itself a protest against the trend toward desegregation—has got out of hand and now takes the form of resisting any further delegation of power to the President. The South has led the fight for "right-to-work" laws in an effort to nullify certain federal labor statutes. The South opposes the federal minimum wage law; and three Southern states recently approved official boycotts of Japanese textiles in order to counteract federal tariff reductions.

But there is another simpler explanation of Senator

THE NEW REPUBLIC

1244 NINETEENTH ST. N.W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

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Published weekly and Copyrighted, 1957 in the USA by The New Republic, Inc., and distributed to newsstands by the Eastern News Company, N. Y. 14, N. Y. Phone: REpublic 7-8656. Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1950, at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Single copy, 25c; Yearly subscription, $7.00; Foreign, $8.00; Armed Forces personnel or students, $5.00. Subscribers desiring change of address should notify us at least three weeks in advance. Please include both old and new addresses.

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Russell and many of his Southern colleagues. The South fears that by helping foreign economies, especially in the Middle East, we may be helping to increase foreign production of raw cotton, and that this cotton, once manufactured into textiles, will compete with our domestic textiles. The South has been transformed in a single generation from a predominantly agricultural exporting area, favoring liberal trade policies, into a semi-industrial region in which both natural and synthetic textiles are a major source of wealth. These same two industries, when located in New England, were largely responsible for a high tariff sentiment. Now that sentiment has gone South, along with the industries.

Yet the parochial approach of the Senator Russells to foreign economic assistance may be only temporary. For the industrial revolution is rapidly introducing a far wider range of manufacturing throughout the region, much of it interested in exports and hence in the prosperity of prospective foreign customers. We shall be in a better position to judge how far the isolationist shift has gone, both in the South and the country as a whole, when the President, sometime next month, sends Congress his Mutual Security program for 1958.

Birth of a Nation

ALTHOUGH it is believed that the new State of Ghana was once a great African Empire stretching from Timbuktu, on the edge of the Sahara and then South to Bamako and across to the Atlantic, she has not been a nation since the 11th Century. For 400 years all the great European Powers have preyed upon her; in fact it is estimated that between 1680 and 1780 more than two million slaves were carried away to New England and the West Indies. Now she is a nation, the first Black Dominion of the British Commonwealth, free, if she can, to build a new civilization of her own. That is surely exciting enough, but for the West the State of Ghana presents a much more dramatic question. In political terms Africa is as the world was on the first day of creation. This vast, seething and revolutionary continent can choose to side either with the West or the East, and she might be decisive.

Nobody should underestimate the difficulties. In fact a realist would come to the conclusion that the odds are all against the West. Ghana has no middle class and no tradition of democracy. The new state is faced with frightening social problems—the grime of poverty has hardly shifted for centuries. Politically, Ghana's 5 million people are made up of various tribes who have different traditions and speak different languages. Industrially, the North lags far behind the South, and the fall in the price of cocoa—the main source of income— is a very serious matter.

But while there is a dark side, there are also signs of promise and hope. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's Prime Minister, has made many mistakes since he gained power six years ago, but on the whole, he has so far resisted the temptation to go to extremes.

"Ireland, Green and Sad"

ON ELECTION DAY in the Irish Republic the most widespread comment was that the populace was rushing to the polls to register its apathy. The two major parties, Eamon de Valera's Fianna Fail (O'Tweedledum) and Sean Costello's Fine Gael (O'Tweedledee) have been providing alternate governments for the 19 years of independence and the country's basic problems remain as far from solution as ever: the rising tide of unemployment, now approaching 100,000; the continuing record emigration, draining Ireland of manpower at the rate of 50,000 persons a year; and the economic crisis caused by an adverse balance of payments, a stagnant national income, and insufficient productivity. Ireland is the only country aided by the United States which has been unable to spend its Marshall Plan funds of 18 million dollars because it can find no projects to spend them on.

The basic trouble is that Ireland has been investing in industry and subsidizing inefficient plants behind protective walls, at the expense of the country's major asset, agriculture. These conditions are reminiscent of pre-Gomulka Poland. Low cattle prices have added to the farmer's woes. And one of Mr. Costello's election promises was to convert peat into briquettes, while across the border, on election day, the North Ireland government announced its plans for an atomic power station.

Nevertheless a few important facts have emerged from the campaign. There has been increasing talk of new alignments, perhaps of a national government, although Mr. de Valera, who captured 78 seats out of 147 in the Dail, opposes the latter because he fears it would create a functioning Liberal opposition for the first time. The unemployment crisis has caused the Labor Party to feel that its future lies not in coalition but as an independent working-class political force, and the loss of six of its 18 seats has brought it to the cross-roads. Labor's most important figure, Jim Larkin, has refused to run for office again on the old lines, and will probably lead the regroupment.

Moreover Dr. Noel Browne, who as Minister of Health caused a furor in 1951 and was forced to resign for defying the Catholic hierarchy's opposition to his mother-and-child welfare scheme, has regained his Dail seat as an independent. Browne's single-handed triumph makes him the logical man to join with Larkin in a Liberal-Labor coalition, the first new movement in Irish politics.

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Whittaker to the Court

CHARLES EVANS WHITTAKER, the President's nominee for the succession to Mr. Justice Reed, retired, is a self-made and self-educated man. For a number of years he was engaged in a highly successful corporate law practice in Kansas City. He has been on the lower federal Bench for less than three years. No other clues to the quality of the man are available to the public, and only time will tell whether he has it in him to rise to the demands of his new office.

The nomination is significant, however, in a way that does not touch Whittaker's personal qualifications. It is another demonstration of the Administration's penchant for enunciating shining (if, on analysis, often vacuous) principles from the White House, and then proceeding to act in a manner cynically unrelated to those principles.

Judicial experience, the President has repeatedly said, is the indispensable qualification in a nominee for the Supreme Court; and as is customary with such pronouncements, the implication has been that it would be immoral to disregard it. Many students of the Court have thought that to establish such a *sine qua non* was unwisely to restrict the area within which the necessarily difficult search for the exceptional man fit for the office might be pursued. The nation's judicial experience belies the proposition that the candidate's judicial experience is an indispensable qualification. The names of Marshall, Taney, Miller, Bradley and Brandeis speak against it.

Be that as it may, however, a tenable if answerable argument could be made that a regular practice of promoting judges of the lower state and federal courts to the Supreme Court would serve the important purpose of raising the quality of our entire judiciary. For the prospect of promotion would attract to the lower courts men of the first rank whose services are now often difficult to obtain. And the prospect of promotion would encourage superior performance on lower courts. This is presumably what the President has in mind. But this is not the purpose his nominations are serving. For he has twice made the lower federal Bench merely a quick relay post for men earmarked from the beginning for rapid transit to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Justice Harlan's sojourn on the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit was exceedingly brief. And Judge Whittaker's rise from the District Court, through the Court of Appeals to his present nomination has been breath-taking. This is no reflection on either of them. Nor does it reflect on Judge Whittaker that his rise is no doubt accounted for by the potent backing of Roy Roberts of the *Kansas City Star*, whose lawyer Mr. Whittaker was. What is very disturbing is that a nomination perfectly in keeping with our political mores, and for all we know a good nomination, is made behind the screen of a pious principle which it does not serve.

Next Week

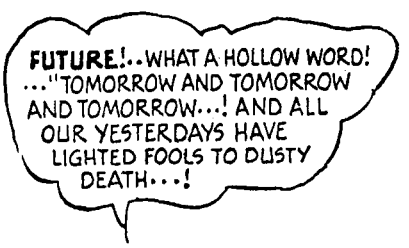
WILLIAM WORTHY

How Much Can A Reporter Learn Inside China?

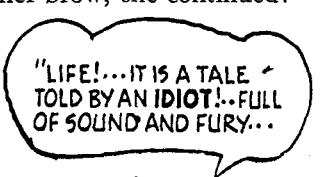
O-t Br--f C-ndl-

THE CITIZENS of advanced and enlightened civilizations—our own for instance—are not permitted to remove and shrink other people's heads. We do enjoy, however, a sophisticated variant of this diversion, which consists of dissevering a man's thought from the body of his work and skillfully reducing it in size, until it appears to be the product of the tiniest mind imaginable. This subtle art undoubtedly reaches its apogee in *The Reader's Digest*, which scrupulously culls mini-thoughts from popular magazines, and then deftly reduces them still further.

But all accomplished miniaturists are not on *The Reader's Digest*. Last week we observed a really splendid piece of compression in, of all places, the comic strip called "Mary Worth." A certain young lady, feeling somewhat out of sorts, flung wide her arms and expostulated thus:



for a net gain of 18 words over Shakespeare's version. Then, clutching her brow, she continued:



thereby neatly clipping off another 23 words. After which, she made her exit, shouting over her shoulder:

Altogether this represents a saving of more than half the passage, a record of which the *Digest* itself might well be proud. The poetry is doubtless somewhat impaired, but there has to be some loss when Shakespeare is squeezed into little balloons. A balloon is only a balloon, and not a dirigible.

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The Superficial Aspect

A Measure of Doubt

WELL, Israel has been battered to her knees. She has surrendered her natural defenses and hereafter will exist at the pleasure of the United Nations and specifically that of the United States. She has been compelled to subscribe to the theory that the United Nations will defend her in the future, although it has not defended her in the past; and she had as an excuse for accepting this theory only the word of Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles. Even that is qualified. They do not say that they will defend Israel, only that they will consider her case.

To a superficial observer this appears to be a bit rough on Israel but no doubt there are underlying motives imperceptible on the surface. As to these, one can only guess, but presumably one is the necessity of maintaining respect among foreigners for the high moral tone of Washington. Nations less elevated morally must not be allowed to get the impression that the United States will ever condone sin, except when the sinner, like Russia, is too strong to be chastised; or, like Egypt, is too tough; or, like India, is sinning only against infidels who do not believe even in the Old Testament, to say nothing of the New.

Israel comes under none of these exceptions. Israel is weak. Israel has always been polite to this country. Israel prays to the same God who receives the devotions of Mr. John Foster Dulles. Therefore Israel like Britain and France, must be dealt with sternly, lest she begin to get ideas. After all, it is not easy in this sinful world to maintain respect for a high moral tone. The Pure in Heart are always being misrepresented by the Morally Stunted, and steps must be taken to counteract the effect.

For instance, there was the matter of the lavish hospitality we extended to the eminent slave-owner from Saudi Arabia. Some have seen in that a sign of approbation, if not of slave-owning, at least of the general attitude of the Arabians toward this country, which has been, and is, one of studied insolence. It goes without saying that a government taking pride in its elevated moral tone cannot approve of either slavery or insolence. The Arabian was anointed with goose grease for no such reason, but strictly as a matter of business. He is in position, if he were offended, to make trouble for the oil industry which considers itself entitled to the tender care, not only of Vice President Nixon since the days when he was a Senator, but also of the Texas-dominated opposition.

What the Morally Stunted seem incapable of understanding is the fine distinction that the Administration draws between a business deal and a moral attitude. No important industry was threatened by the squashing of Israel, so the Administration in that case was free to take the highest moral tone and happily availed itself of the opportunity. As touching Egypt, India and Russia circumstances are entirely different. Taking a high moral tone with them would upset any number of applecarts, which is not to be thought of.

There is, of course, the danger that Israel itself contains a considerable number of the Morally Stunted, who may take the view that they might as well be hanged for the old sheep as for the lamb, and who therefore may desert morality for business. If they are destined to be squashed in any event they may decide that they would stand a better chance under the Russians than under the Arabs, and so throw out Ben-Gurion and his pro-Western government.

Recent events strongly indicate that if we, or anybody else, should supply the Israeli with, say, $100 million worth of the harrows of hell, there would shortly be no Arabian problem in the Middle East because there would be no Arabs. It has undoubtedly occurred to the Kremlin that this is a possible business deal, but the Kremlin needs cash which the Israeli do not have. Yet the record of Israel is strengthening the belief that if anyone would accept, say, 30-year, 3 percent bonds, the interest would be paid and the bonds retired when due, which would be a good investment, as international deals go. If Ben-Gurion should be thrown out, the Kremlin might stretch a point.

THIS CREATES a measure of doubt that the Administration has clearly perceived the truth in this situation. Perhaps this, too, instead of being entirely a moral issue, is affected with a business interest and should be approached with the same moral elasticity we have displayed in dealing with Egypt and India, to say nothing of Russia. It would be a neat irony of history if the event should prove that an Administration priding itself on the equal devotion it has exhibited to the two principles of moral elevation and Business is Business, had confused the two at last and applied moral principle to a business deal. The effect would be terrific; but it would not be the first time that some such irony has crept in—as for example, at Munich in 1938—to reduce the Pure in Heart to confusion and chagrin.

GERALD W. JOHNSON

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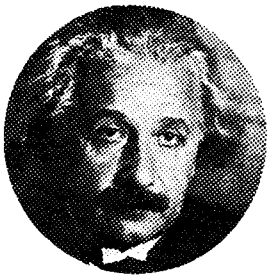
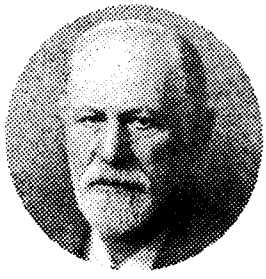


Why Do Men Fight?

An Exchange of Letters

Between Einstein and Freud in 1932



DEAR PROFESSOR FREUD:

IS THERE any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war? It is common knowledge that, with the advance of modern science, this issue has come to mean a matter of life and death for civilization as we know it; nevertheless, for all the zeal displayed, every attempt at its solution has ended in a lamentable breakdown.

As one immune from nationalist bias, I personally see a simple way of dealing with the superficial (*i.e.* administrative) aspect of the problem: the setting up, by international consent, of a legislative and judicial body to settle every conflict arising between nations. . . . But here, at the outset, I come up against a difficulty; a tribunal is a human institution which, in proportion as the power at its disposal is inadequate to enforce its verdicts, is all the more prone to suffer these to be deflected by extrajudicial pressure. This is a fact with which we have to reckon; law and might inevitably go hand in hand. . . . At present we are far from possessing any supranational organization competent to render verdicts of uncontestable authority and enforce absolute submission to the execution of its verdicts. Thus I am led to my first axiom: the quest of international security involves the unconditional surrender by every nation, in a certain measure, of its liberty of action, its sovereignty that is to say, and it is clear beyond all doubt that no other road can lead to such security.

The ill-success, despite their obvious sincerity, of all the efforts made during the last decade to reach this goal leaves us no room to doubt that strong psychological factors are at work, which paralyze these efforts. . . . The craving for power which characterizes the governing class in every nation is hostile to any limitation of the national sovereignty. This political power-hunger is wont to batten on the activities of another group, whose aspirations are on purely mercenary, economic lines. I have specially in mind that small but determined group, active in every nation, composed of individuals who, indifferent to social considerations and restraints, regard warfare, the manufacture and sale of arms, simply as an occasion to advance their personal interests and enlarge their personal authority.

But recognition of this obvious fact is merely the first step toward an appreciation of the actual state of affairs. Another question follows hard upon it: How is it possible for this small clique to bend the will of the majority, who stand to lose and suffer by a state of war, to the service of their ambitions? . . . An obvious answer to this question would seem to be that the minority, the ruling class at present, has the schools and press, usually the Church as well, under its thumb. This enables it to sway the emotions of the masses. . . .

Yet even this answer does not provide a complete solution. Another question arises from it: How is it these devices succeed so well in rousing men to such wild enthusiasm, even to sacrifice their lives? Only one answer is possible. Because man has within him a lust for hatred and destruction. In normal times this passion exists in a latent state, it emerges only in unusual circumstances; but it is a comparatively easy task to call it into play and raise it to the power of a collective psychosis. Here lies, perhaps, the crux of all the complex factors we are considering, an enigma that only the expert in the lore of human instincts can resolve.

And so we come to our last question. Is it possible to control man's mental evolution so as to make him proof against the psychoses of hate and destructiveness? Here I am thinking by no means only of the so-called uncultured masses. Experience proves that it is rather the so-called "Intelligentsia" that is most apt to yield to these disastrous collective suggestions, since the intellectual has no direct contact with life in the raw, but encounters it in its easiest, synthetic form—upon the printed page.

. . . I have so far been speaking only of wars between nations; what are known as international conflicts. But I am well aware that the aggressive instinct operates under other forms and in other circumstances. . . . But my insistence on what is the most typical, most cruel and extravagant form of conflict between man and man was deliberate, for here we have the best occasion of discovering ways and means to render all armed conflicts impossible.

I know that in your writings we may find answers, explicit or implied, to all the issues of this urgent and absorbing problem. But it would be of the greatest service to us all were you to present the problem of world peace in the light of your most recent discoveries,

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for such a presentation well might blaze the trail for new and fruitful modes of action.

Yours very sincerely,

A. EINSTEIN

CAPUTH NEAR POTSDAM, JULY 30, 1932

DEAR PROFESSOR EINSTEIN:

THE QUESTION which you put me—what is to be done to rid mankind of the war menace?—took me by surprise. And, next, I was dumbfounded by the thought of my (of *our,* I almost wrote) incompetence; for this struck me as being a matter of practical politics, the statesman's proper study. But then I realized that you did not raise the question in your capacity of scientist or physicist, but as a lover of his fellow men. . . . And I reminded myself that I was not being called on to formulate practical proposals, but, rather, to explain how this question of preventing wars strikes a psychologist. . . .

You begin with the relations between Might and Right, and this is assuredly the proper starting point for our enquiry. But, for the term "might," I would substitute a tougher and more telling word: "violence." In right and violence we have today an obvious antinomy. . . . Conflicts of interest between man and man are resolved, in principle, by the recourse to violence. It is the same in the animal kingdom. . . . To start with, brute force was the factor which, in small communities, decided points of ownership and the question which man's will was to prevail. Very soon physical force was implemented, then replaced, by the use of various adjuncts; he proved the victor whose weapon was the better, or handled the more skilfully. Now, for the first time, with the coming of weapons, superior brains began to oust brute force, but the object of the conflict remained the same; one party was to be constrained, by the injury done him or impairment of his strength, to retract a claim or a refusal. This end is most effectively gained when the opponent is definitively put out of action—in other words, is killed. This procedure has two advantages: the enemy cannot renew hostilities, and, secondly, his fate deters others from following his example. Moreover, the slaughter of a foe gratifies an instinctive craving—a point to which we shall revert hereafter. However, another consideration may best set off against this will to kill: the possibility of using an enemy for servile tasks if his spirit be broken and his life spared. Here violence finds an outlet not in slaughter but in subjugation. Hence springs the practice of giving quarter; but the victor, having from now on to reckon with the craving for revenge that rankles in his victim, forfeits to some extent his personal security.

Thus, under primitive conditions, it is superior force —brute violence, or violence backed by arms—that lords it everywhere. We know that in the course of evolution this state of things was modified, a path was traced that led away from violence to law. But what was this path? Surely it issued from a single verity; that the superiority of one strong man can be overborne by an alliance of many weaklings, that *l'union fait la force.* Brute force is overcome by union, the allied might of scattered units makes good its right against the isolated giant. Thus we may define "right" (*i.e.* law) as the might of a community. Yet it, too, is nothing else than violence, quick to attack whatever individual stands in its path, and it employs the selfsame methods, follows like ends, but with one difference: it is the communal, not individual, violence that has its way. But, for the transition from crude violence to the reign of law, a certain psychological condition must first obtain. The union of the majority must be stable and enduring. If its sole *raison d'etre* be the discomfiture of some overweening individual and, after his downfall, it be dissolved, it leads to nothing. Some other man, trusting to his superior power, will seek to reinstate the rule of violence and the cycle will repeat itself unendingly. Thus the union of the people must be permanent and well organized; it must enact rules to meet the risk of possible revolts; must set up machinery ensuring that its rules—the laws—are observed and that such acts of violence as the laws demand are duly carried out. This recognition of a community of interests engenders among the members of the group a sentiment of unity and fraternal solidarity which constitutes its real strength.

So far I have set out what seems to me the kernel of the matter: the suppression of brute force by the transfer of power to a larger combination, founded on the community of sentiments linking up its members. . . . But such a combination is only theoretically possible; in practice the situation is always complicated by the fact that, from the outset, the group includes elements of unequal power. . . . The most casual glance at world history will show an unending series of conflicts between one community and another or a group of others, between large and smaller units, between cities, countries, races, tribes and kingdoms, almost all of which were settled by the ordeal of war. Such wars end either in pillage or in conquest and its fruits, the downfall of the loser. No single all-embracing judgment can be passed on these wars of aggrandizement. Some, like the war between the Mongols and the Turks, have led to unmitigated misery; others, however, have furthered the transition from violence to law, since they brought larger units into being, within whose limits a recourse to violence was banned and a new regime determined all disputes. Thus the Roman con-

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quests brought that boon, the *pax romana,* to the Mediterranean lands. The French kings' lust for aggrandizement created a new France, flourishing in peace and unity. Paradoxical as it sounds, we must admit that warfare well might serve to pave the way to that unbroken peace we so desire, for it is war that brings vast empires into being, within whose frontiers all warfare is proscribed by a strong central power. In practice, however, this end is not attained, for as a rule, the fruits of victory are but short-lived, the new-created unit falls asunder once again, generally because there can be no true cohesion between the parts that violence has welded. Hitherto, moreover, such conquests have only led to aggregations which, for all their magnitude, had limits, and disputes between these units could be resolved only by recourse to arms. For humanity at large the sole result of all these military enterprises was that, instead of frequent not to say incessant little wars, they had now to face great wars which, for all they came less often, were so much the more destructive.

"Some Unifying Notion"

REGARDING the world of today the same conclusion holds good, and you, too, have reached it, though by a shorter path. There is but one sure way of ending war and that is the establishment, by common consent, of a central control which shall have the last word in every conflict of interest. . . . [But] obviously such notions as these can only be significant when they are the expression of a deeply rooted sense of unity, shared by all. It is necessary, therefore, to gauge the efficacy of such sentiments. History tells us that, on occasion, they have been effective. For example, the Panhellenic conception, the Greeks' awareness of superiority over their barbarian neighbors, which found expression in the Amphictyonies, the Oracles and Games, was strong enough to humanize the methods of warfare as between Greeks, though inevitably it failed to prevent conflicts between different elements of the Hellenic race or even to deter a city or group of cities from joining forces with their racial foe, the Persians, for the discomfiture of a rival. The solidarity of Christendom in the Renaissance age was no more effective, despite its vast authority, in hindering Christian nations, large and small alike, from calling in the Sultan to their aid. And, in our times, we look in vain for some such unifying notion whose authority would be unquestioned. It is all too clear that the nationalistic ideas, paramount today in every country, operate in quite a contrary direction. Some there are who hold that the Bolshevist conceptions may make an end of war, but, as things are, that goal lies very far away and, perhaps, could only be attained after a spell of brutal internecine warfare. Thus it would seem that any effort to replace brute force by the might of an ideal is, under present conditions, doomed to fail. Our logic is at fault if we ignore the fact that right is founded on brute force and even today needs violence to maintain it.

The Death Instinct

I NOW can comment on another of your statements. You are amazed that it is so easy to infect men with the war-fever, and you surmise that man has in him an active instinct for hatred and destruction, amenable to such stimulations. I entirely agree with you. I believe in the existence of this instinct and have been recently at pains to study its manifestations. In this connection may I set out a fragment of that knowledge of the instincts, which we psychoanalysts, after so many tentative essays and gropings in the dark have compassed? We assume that human instincts are of two kinds: those that conserve and unify, which we call "erotic" (in the meaning Plato gives to *Eros* in his *Symposium*), or else "sexual" (explicitly extending the popular connotation of "sex"); and, secondly, the instincts to destroy and kill, which we assimilate as the aggressive or destructive instincts. . . . Each of these instincts is every whit as indispensable as its opposite and all the phenomena of life derive from their activity, whether they work in concert or in opposition. . . . Thus the instinct of self-preservation is certainly of an erotic nature, but to gain its ends this very instinct necessitates aggressive action. In the same way the love-instinct, when directed to a specific object, calls for an admixture of the acquisitive instinct if it is to enter into effective possession of that object. . . .

If you will travel with me a little further on this road, you will find that human affairs are complicated in yet another way. Only exceptionally does an action follow on the stimulus of a single instinct, which is *per se* a blend of Eros and destructiveness. As a rule several motives of similar composition concur to bring about the act. . . . Thus, when a nation is summoned to engage in war, a whole gamut of human motives may respond to this appeal; high and low motives, some openly avowed, others slurred over. . . . Musing on the atrocities recorded on history's page, we feel that the ideal motive has often served as a camouflage for the lust of destruction; sometimes, as with the cruelties of the Inquisition, it seems that, while the ideal motives occupied the foreground of consciousness, they drew their strength from the destructive instincts submerged in the unconscious. . . .

You are interested, I know, in the prevention of war, not in our theories, and I keep this fact in mind. Yet I would like to dwell a little longer on this destructive instinct which is seldom given the attention that its importance warrants. . . . The living being . . . defends its own existence by destroying foreign bodies. But, in one of its activities, the death instinct is opera-

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tive *within* the living being and we have sought to trace back a number of normal and pathological phenomena to this *introversion* of the destructive instinct. . . . Obviously when this internal tendency operates on too large a scale, it is no trivial matter, rather a positively morbid state of things; whereas the diversion of the destructive impulse toward the external world must have beneficial effects. Here is then the biological justification for all those vile, pernicious propensities which we now are combatting. We can but own that they are really more akin to nature than this our stand against them, which, in fact, remains to be accounted for.

All this may give you the impression that our theories amount to a species of mythology and a gloomy one at that! But does not every natural science lead ultimately to this—a sort of mythology? Is it otherwise today with your physical science?

The upshot of these observations . . . is that there is no likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity's aggressive tendencies. In some happy corners of the earth, they say, where nature brings forth abundantly whatever man desires, there flourish races whose lives go gently by, unknowing of aggression or constraint. This I can hardly credit; I would like further details about these happy folk. The Bolshevists, too, aspire to do away with human aggressiveness by ensuring the satisfaction of material needs and enforcing equality between man and man. To me this hope seems vain. Meanwhile they busily perfect their armaments, and their hatred of outsiders is not the least of the factors of cohesion amongst themselves. . . .

From our "mythology" of the instincts we may easily deduce a formula for an indirect method of eliminating war. If the propensity for war be due to the destructive instinct, we have always its counter-agent, Eros, to our hand. All that produces ties of sentiment between man and man must serve us as war's antidote. . . .

In your strictures on the abuse of authority I find another suggestion for an indirect attack on the war-impulse. That men are divided into leaders and the led is but another manifestation of their inborn and irremediable inequality. The second class constitutes the vast majority; they need a high command to make decisions for them, to which decisions they usually bow without demur. In this context we would point out that men should be at greater pains than heretofore to form a superior class of independent thinkers, unamenable to intimidation and fervent in the quest of truth, whose function it would be to guide the masses dependent on their lead. There is no need to point out how little the rule of politicians and the Church's ban on liberty of thought encourage such a new creation. The ideal conditions would obviously be found in a community where every man subordinated his instinctive life to the dictates of reason. Nothing less than this could bring about so thorough and so durable a union between men, even if this involved the severance of mutual ties of sentiment. But surely such a hope is utterly utopian, as things are. The other indirect methods of preventing war are certainly more feasible, but entail no quick results. They conjure up an ugly picture of mills that grind so slowly that, before the flour is ready, men are dead of hunger.

The Psychic Disposition

As you see, little good comes of consulting a theoretician, aloof from worldly contacts, on practical problems! Better it were to tackle each successive crisis with means that we have ready to our hands. However, I would like to deal with a question which, though it is not mooted in your letter, interests me greatly. Why do we, you and I and many another, protest so vehemently against war, instead of just accepting it as another of life's odious importunities? . . . I trust you will not be shocked by my raising such a question. For the better conduct of an inquiry it may be well to don a mask of feigned aloofness. The answer to my query may run as follows: Because every man has a right over his own life and war destroys lives that were full of promise; it forces the individual into situations that shame his manhood, obliging him to murder fellow men, against his will; it ravages material amenities, the fruits of human toil, and much besides. Moreover wars, as now conducted, afford no scope for acts of heroism according to the old ideals and, given the high perfection of modern arms, war today would mean the sheer extermination of one of the combatants, if not of both. This is so true, so obvious, that we can but wonder why the conduct of war is not banned by general consent. . . . Pacifists we are, since our organic nature wills us thus to be. Hence it comes easy to us to find arguments that justify our standpoint.

This point, however, calls for elucidation. Here is the way in which I see it. The cultural development of mankind (some, I know, prefer to call it civilization) has been in progress since immemorial antiquity. To this process we owe all that is best in our composition, but also much that makes for human suffering. Its origins and causes are obscure, its issue is uncertain, but some of its characteristics are easy to perceive. It well may lead to the extinction of mankind, for it impairs the sexual function in more than one respect, and even today the uncivilized races and the backward classes of all nations are multiplying more rapidly than the cultured elements. This process may, perhaps, be likened to the effects of domestication on certain animals—it clearly involves physical changes of structure—but the view that cultural development is an organic process of this order has not yet become generally familiar. . . . Sensations which delighted our forefathers have become neutral or unbearable to us;

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and, if our ethical and aesthetic ideals have undergone a change, the causes of this are ultimately organic. On the psychological side two of the most important phenomena of culture are, firstly, a strengthening of the intellect, which tends to master our instinctive life, and, secondly, an introversion of the aggressive impulse, with all its consequent benefits and perils. Now war runs most emphatically counter to the psychic disposition imposed on us by the growth of culture; we are therefore bound to resent war, to find it utterly intolerable. With pacifists like us it is not merely an intellectual and affective repulsion, but a constitutional intolerance, an idiosyncrasy in its most drastic form.

How long have we to wait before the rest of men turn pacifist? Impossible to say, and yet perhaps our hope that these two factors—man's cultural disposition and a well-founded dread of the form that future wars will take—may serve to put an end to war in the near future, is not chimerical. But by what ways or by-ways this will come about, we cannot guess. . . .

With kindest regards and, should this *expose* prove a disappointment to you, my sincere regrets,

Yours,

SIGMUND FREUD

VIENNA, SEPTEMBER, 1932

Talks with Soviet Intellectuals

by GEORGE GIBIAN

ONE OF MY most cheering encounters in a month of travel in the Soviet Union recently was with a professor of Russian literature at one of the metropolitan universities who turned out to be a dyed-in-the-wool "formalist." He deluged me with questions about Kafka, E. E. Cummings, Faulkner, and others whose names are known only to the narrowest elite. He was particularly concerned about Cummings, not having met anyone for years who could tell him about E. E. He wanted to know if Cummings was still alive; if he was still writing, and then, with bated breath, how he was writing: I told him I was no expert on Cummings but was under the impression that he wrote pretty much in the same style as ever. "Oh, wonderful, I am so glad he has stuck to the straight line!" He said it with so much feeling that it seemed he could have received no better word than that there were still writers abroad who continued to do what the Russian futurists and others no longer were permitted to do, to experiment freely and boldly.

The Soviets have started to publish a literary review devoted to translations from foreign languages, and I met several times with members of their editorial board. These people all know English. Some of them are translators (a highly esteemed specialty in Russia); others poets, novelists, and some critics and scholars. They asked for names of young writers in the various literary genres, wrote them down, asked which works in particular I thought ought to be translated, and which of them would interest a Russian public. The latter was of course partly an allusion to content—a reminder that while Howard Fast's school is no longer the *only* school, still I should not be doing them a service if I suggested translations of politically unacceptable writers. Furthermore, certain writers might be too alien or complex for the Russian public.

I suggested that they offer more Faulkner—only three of his stories and none of his novels have been translated. They dutifully wrote down the titles of stories and novels. But what did I think of New Criticism? To which "little reviews" should they subscribe? What of the comparative merits and the editorial policies of the *Sewanee Review, Partisan Review,* the *Kenyon,* the *New Yorker?*

They knew of T. S. Eliot, but assured me that no matter how much they desire to widen the circle of Westerners whom they translate, Eliot could not be included. "Too much the type of what we consider reactionary." No amount of arguing over artistic merits budged them. Yeats was completely unknown.

The interest in Western literature is encouraging, but one should not think that the battle is won. An example may explain what I mean. A Soviet authority on English and American literature casually referred to a recently published textbook on 20th Century literature in Western Europe. I said I would buy it in a bookstore.

"Oh, no, don't do that," he objected at once. When asked why not, he became evasive. "It is a bad book," he insisted. Finally he said that he did not wish to explain at length, but that perhaps I should understand him if he said that the book was full of poor judgments about Western authors. "There are statements in it which might have been all right five years ago, but which won't do at present."

So far, so good: the book was a Stalinist work which condemned out of hand all but "progressive" writers; whereas in 1956 one is supposed to be somewhat more tolerant of writers, like Mann, Proust, and perhaps Joyce.

But then the professor went on—and here came the disquieting note. There had been a meeting, he said; a

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group of writers, critics and scholars had been called to discuss the book. Some had defended it. "There are still some people who liked things better five or six years ago, who would like to go back to the old days, who find it was much easier that way." But the majority was opposed to the book, and they voted it bad; and so, the professor concluded, soon the book would be withdrawn and another book probably commissioned which would have a more correct point of view.

His remarks were significant in revealing the rearguard struggle the Stalinists are still putting up. But, more important, they reveal the fundamental difference in approach from ours. Under the new dispensation, as under the old, meetings are held in which the majority determines what is correct; after a vote, the now manifestly incorrect book is withdrawn; a properly conceived book is commissioned and praised. The new book may be better but the system remains the same; it is built on the assumption that there is only one truth, that known to the Party.

Don't Let Your Students Read That!

THE STAFF of the Union of Writers in Moscow was questioning me about my own course in Soviet literature at Smith College. They wanted to know what authors my students read and listened impassively as I reeled off names of authors glorified in Soviet Russia (such as Kataev, Leonov, Mayakovsky), amusedly—but without visible surprise—as I named authors either doubtfully regarded, on the black list, or worse, wiped from memory (Babel, Olesha, Zoshchenko, Zamyatin).

But when I spoke of Sofronov's play *The Moscow Character*—which was heaped with Stalinist laurels, was printed and reprinted in magazines and books, performed on scores of stages throughout the Soviet Union, and which we use in my course as an example of a stereotyped, party-approved *agitka* of the postwar period—their reaction was unexpected.

"What—Sofronov?" they asked in amazement and horror. When I assured them they had heard correctly, they looked at each other in silence and then rushed out of the room. I remained behind, embarrassed and wondering what I had said. They came back a couple of minutes later with a whole stack of books which they insisted on presenting me. All these books, they declared, were better than *The Moscow Character*. They did not care which of them I assigned to my students, so long as I did not lead them to believe that Soviet postwar literature had nothing better to offer than Sofronov.

I explained to a group of Moscow writers that it is difficult for an American who does not have time to read everything published in the Soviet Union to know what is worthwhile and what is not. Since their magazines praise so indiscriminately, one does not have the selective guidance provided in our country by reviewers and critics.

They responded immediately by promising to send me whatever comes out in the future that they honestly think is very good. They also named several rather surprising names as the best younger contemporaries, among others Martynov, a poet who is subjective, psychological, and often attacked for being "formalistic"; Kazakevich, a novelist who wrote about the problems of Russian occupation troops in Germany; and several dramatists who fall into the category of writers highly suspect until recently for lacking sufficient socialistic realism.

It was on a train that I watched the "new line" being absorbed. I was reading *Literaturnaya Moskva,* an anthology of the latest writing produced in Moscow. When I laid the book aside, an army officer asked me if he could borrow it for a minute. Leafing through it, he seemed surprised by what he saw. Then he turned to a woman passenger and said briefly, "They are printing Akhmatova!" She did not say a word, but looked at him and reached for the book; then she, too, looked at the contents; she also registered—but did not comment on—the fact that Anna Akhmatova, the victim of several vicious attacks, particularly one by Zhdanov in 1946, and silenced since then, could again appear in a Soviet publication. Then, pensively, she returned the volume.

Other authors who have been in disfavor are being published or are said to be about to be published: Isaac Babel, Boris Pasternak. Viktor Shklovsky, some 30 years ago the most radical formalist critic not merely in Russia but anywhere in the world, has recently published a book on the prose style of Russian writers of the 19th Century. The formalism is rather restrained, of course; still, the focus of the study *is* on literary qualities.

In fact, there is a general drive on in the USSR: "More attention must be paid to artistic qualities of literature"—a slogan stressed in criticism and scholarship as well as in creative writing. But as yet, the seed of the new slogan has brought forth only the tiniest green sprout. The next few years will show whether it has taken root.

The quality that the literary people I spoke with all had in common was their sincere pleasure at talking with a visitor about life and letters in America. I had the impression that the word has gone out that an effort ought to be made to send foreigners home contented. "You are the first American who speaks Russian whom I have ever met and with whom I can talk about his country," or "How nice to be able to speak to an American about things that interest us." Such a change is interpreted by a thinking Russian as symptomatic of other changes: that a general relaxation is involved, that a little more interest in foreign life may be shown, that Russians may speak more freely among themselves and may write a little more personally and individually, that more consumer goods may be put on sale, that relations with other countries in general are probably a little better, and there is less likelihood of war.

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Success Through Competition

I HAD NOT expected the editors, teachers, and critics I met to be as competent and well-trained as they are. True, they have reached their positions after strenuous competition, and on innumerable occasions when one person rather than another has been favored, politics played its part; still, so had sheer professional ability.

These people are well off, and they know they are. Editions of novels and, indeed, of all other books are huge. Ten thousand copies is the minimum for a first edition of a novel by an unknown author; editions of other novels are proportionately larger. Both are often sold out within a few days or weeks.

But the royalty does not depend on the size of the edition or the profit from it. The author is paid by what the Russians call the "printer's sheet"—a folio or signature, as we should say—16 pages of print, about 24 typewritten pages. The royalty for a novel is likely to be 6,000 rubles for a signature; in other words, for a 320-page book—or 20 signatures—120,000 rubles, at the official rate of exchange $30,000 (at a more realistic rate of exchange, 10 to one, $12,000—still not at all bad for a first novel, especially since most novels are likely to be reissued in several editions, for each of which the author is paid again about 75 percent of the original royalty). Consider also that the income tax in Russia is very low, and that novels are usually serialized in the "thick" monthlies or in the newspapers or in both and may come out in children's editions, in the various republics of the Union, and in translation in other languages such as Ukrainian, Georgian, and Armenian—and each time the author is extremely well paid.

Moreover, a book usually has an editor, who is also generously rewarded. Writers take in each other's washing, so to speak. "A" will edit his friend "B's" work, and later "B" will edit "A's" book. So it is no wonder that writers buy or build *dachas* near Moscow or in the South, that many own cars—a great luxury in Russia. In fact, the successful writers never need think of money; whatever may be bought is within their financial reach.

Younger, less established writers, of course, do not live so well; but even they make out all right. They receive subsidies for "studying life"—documentation is greatly favored in Soviet Russia, and a plan for a novel about a factory in Siberia or a youth settlement near Vladivostok will quite likely produce a travel and maintenance grant for a lengthy stay wherever the projected book is set. They also benefit from various installations of the Union of Writers such as rest homes, summer homes, club rooms, and *putyovky*—summer holiday tickets, including transportation, hotel accommodations, and all the rest, in Yalta, Sochi, the Caucasus, or some other resort—at 50 percent, or 33 percent, or 10 percent of the price, or in some cases completely free.

Surprisingly, scholarly work, be it on the most esoteric subject, is paid almost as well as fiction. A work on Sumerian archaeology, or medieval Slavic philology, will be paid at the rate of some four to five thousand rubles per signature. One professor asked me knowingly whether it was true that in the United States some scholarly journals paid nothing for one's published work. I had to admit that this was indeed the rule rather than the exception. "That is what I have heard," he murmured, shaking his head with some incredulity but also with some smugness over having scored a point.

A university professor will make five or six thousand rubles a month (for comparison: a chauffeur is paid about 500 a month, a steel worker 1,000); in addition he will be paid for many outside assignments, editing, publishing, consulting.

The highest rank, academicians, have no real counterparts in the United States. Perhaps the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton is as close as we come to it. A member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences draws a high salary, is greatly honored, and has no teaching duties. (Of course many academicians do hold professorships and other offices; but they do not need to, and they are paid extra if they do.) The academician's income probably totals some 25,000 rubles a month—or more than $6,000 at the official rate.

Big Carrot, Hidden Stick

TO SAY that intellectuals are bought would be crude. But such extremely attractive rewards during and at the climax of a literary or artistic career are a constant temptation to try to conform. It is thus that the Party "line" is sold. Secret police, arrests, work camps are the last and relatively rare resort.

To give a concrete illustration: In Moscow I spoke with an art historian about the great interest the Russian public was showing in the French Impressionists. Nineteenth Century paintings from France were being exhibited in the Pushkin Museum, and the crowds there far surpassed those looking at the socialistic-realistic canvasses in that museum and in the Tretyakov Gallery. Yet Picasso, Matisse, Braque and other post-impressionists are seldom written about in Russia; they are frequently condemned. "Is writing about them forbidden?" I asked. The answer was "No, certainly not." A graduate student, a "candidate" as they call him, is not forbidden to write a dissertation on Matisse. If he did choose that topic, he would not be arrested; he would not even be told to pick another subject. But everybody knows that "to write a dissertation on Matisse is in bad taste." It is good taste to write on Goya, or on Daumier, or on any one of the innumerable Soviet or 19th Century Russian realists—Repin, say, or Serov.

What would be the consequences of insisting on writing of Matisse or of a comparable modern? Well—the person would not be given a good teaching position; he

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might end by teaching in a secondary school in Northern Russia or in Siberia. He would not be published. The feeling would develop that he was unco-operative; he would certainly not have made a proper start on a career leading to a position in a university in Leningrad or Moscow, or to successful publication, not to mention the ultimate vista of the Academy.

The Masses under the Elite

THE NON-ELITE—those I met casually on trains, buses, airplanes, in restaurants, museums, galleries, or on beaches—were very different. They were often more delightful than the writers; more generous, open, friendly. But they lacked both the information on which to base any independent thought, and the skill or habit of critical examination. In affairs which concern them immediately—the food situation, housing, prices of textiles, hours of work—they were naturally well informed and shrewd; direct experience eclipsed what the papers printed. But outside the brief diameter of their personal lives, they swallow everything.

After a few days I could pick out the clichés from *Vechernaya Moskva* and *Leningradksaya Pravda.* I think they believe everything—until they run into some hard fact which breaks the pace of obedient following. In foreign policy, such hard facts are few. Hitler's invasion was one, Tito's defection and readmission another.

This was brought home to me by the consternation of a charming blonde guide in Kiev, to whom I confided that there were people abroad who did not think that the USSR is in every way a perfect realization of Marx's hopes, indeed, that many believe there is no equality and little socialism in Russia, and that state capitalism is a much better description of the country than Communism.

She had never heard of such a view. I must be trying to test her. I assured her I was not. She stared at me, hoping that I should break out laughing and admit it was all a joke. But I did not. She exclaimed, "But you are an educated person, you graduated from a university and teach in one; it is not possible that you could believe such things!" Her confusion was even greater when I said that to our way of thinking, you are not free unless there is more than one political party, people can print books and newspapers freely, disagree with each other in private life and over the radio.

Did I mean to suggest that the government ought to permit false views to be printed and propagated? Yes, I said. "But how confusing to the people," she objected. "How do they know what is true and what is false when their government allows all sorts of lies to be printed? It is wrong of a government to expose its people to lies!"

The questions which people put to me about America made clear the extent to which they believe the Party's propaganda. The "terrible unemployment in the United States" worried many of them. "And when," I was asked, "is the United States going to attack us?" Or, "why does the United States want to attack us?" Or, mildest of all, did I think the United States planned to attack. Then, after my denial, they would ask: "Then why do you have all those bases all around our great country?"

Reading room in the House of Culture of fishing industry workers, Nakhodka Harbor, Soviet Far East

The idea had never occurred to them that other countries might feel some need to defend themselves against the USSR. "Whom has the USSR ever attacked?" one man asked me innocently. I braced myself for a violent reaction after listing a string of countries, from the Baltic to Finland and beyond. Fortunately, and to my surprise, he remained thoughtfully silent.

One kind old man thought that in a way my trip was a waste of time, for "it is too bad you will not be able to tell the truth about the USSR when you return home, they would lock you up if you did." (Two unconscious assumptions: that the "truth" would be complimentary to Russia, and that in America people are locked up if they praise something they saw in Russia.)

Another said he was pleased that a few Americans now could come to Russia, that he hoped more would do so, and, he added, "Perhaps the day will come when all borders between countries are abolished, and then all the millions of people in North and South America and Western Europe will be free to emigrate and settle in Soviet Russia and share our great life." (Three assumptions: that life in Soviet Russia is better than in the West, that people in the West are clamoring to move to Russia, and that they are being prevented from doing so only by their reactionary government.)

He meant his remark kindly, in a spirit similar to the vaguely humanitarian American who says he hopes all religions will be united in one. The assumptions behind the remark cease to be so astonishing when we note that the Soviet press prints articles about every handful of Ukrainians returning to the USSR from Argentina or Uruguay, and needless to say, never mentions the thousands who have fled Russia, or the barbed wire, machine gun towers, and ploughed strips along the borders of the USSR, aimed at keeping people in, not out.

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AN AMERICAN NEAR CRACOW

FROM THE MOST exclusive night clubs in Warsaw to the numerous weekend student dances and the current pre-Lenten "carnival" balls, jazz is the thing in Poland. Pedestrians walk along one of Warsaw's main streets on Saturday and Sunday nights to the tempo of Louis Armstrong records broadcast over a loudspeaker in an upper window of one of the university clubs. The latest innovation, "rock and roll," has caused a sensation.

But jazz is not the only formerly taboo product of the United States which is now praised. There is coca-cola, once branded the arch-symbol of "decadent American imperialism" and now labelled "wonderful," "distinctive" and "original in taste" by the Polish press. Few Poles have actually *tasted* the drink, but they will: there is to be a competition in "coke" production between socialist producer's co-operatives. One brand named "cocktail cola" will be put on the market in Szczecin, while the "original coca-cola" will be produced in Lodz.

This unbounded curiosity about America is not limited to the relatively more sophisticated urban Poles; it pervades the countryside, as I saw during a trip to a peasant meeting outside Cracow during the recent Polish election campaign.

As we drove over the bumpy road into the countryside, a member of the Cracow Committee of the United Workers Party (Communist) confided: "People around here have seen so few Americans. I hope you do not mind that we have circulated word of your coming, for the peasants will be sure to attend now." And as if to put me at my ideological ease, both he and the Communist candidate who accompanied us and who was to speak later at the meeting outdid each other in condemning the past system.

Our destination was a tiny village, that is to say a scattering of hovel-like buildings, and we arrived a half-hour late. No matter. No one seemed perturbed; the peasant chairman indicated a further hour's delay due to peasants coming from outlying farms. Those present welcomed this opportunity to engage in private conversation in the bare but warm office above the crudely-constructed meeting hall. The local army commandant and several village elders joined us. They described the past distortions of Communist policy in agriculture, and I attempted answers on everything from washing machines to skyscrapers.

Soon pictures of friends and relatives in the States were being circulated, and someone made a remark which was to recur time and again during conversations in Poland: "Do you know that Chicago is the second largest Polish city in the world?" It was only one reminder of the ties of blood which give Poles an intense personal pride in American achievements. "We love Americans," said the Chairman, "and are only sorry we do not have the opportunity to love American automobiles as well!"

By this time the hall below had filled, and down the stairs we went. It was the size of an average grammar school auditorium: rows of primitive wooden benches, bare light bulbs seen through a haze of cigarette smoke. There was no heating, but a musty warmth radiated from the ranks of peasants who sat elbow-to-elbow or stood jammed against the walls—all dressed in rudely-quilted jackets and heavy leather boots. As our party entered, the buzz of conversation stopped.

The chairman opened the meeting by calling the candidate and various dignitaries to the speaker's table, and, to a burst of applause, the "American journalist" too was invited forward. After a 45-minute speech by the candidate, the meeting was thrown open for discussion from the floor.

THERE WAS an awkward silence. Eyes shifted nervously. The chairman turned to my student interpreter with a whisper: "They are not usually so shy. Perhaps, if the American could say a few words. . . ." But of course I would. The subsequent few words of appreciation for the friendly reception were greeted with an enthusiastic applause and the ice was broken; the audience began to speak its mind. One peasant, in mellow rhetoric, expressed his pleasure at the changes since October: "A new life begins to blossom in Poland like a flower. . . ." If the government keeps its promises, it would have his help. "What we want is a candidate who will fight for these ideas!" Another took the floor and expressed his delight at having an American present: "He is no longer surrounded by police. Now we have real democracy, where a US citizen can just walk in and talk with us!"

Later, as we rose to go, the chairman addressed these final words to me: "Take our warmest greetings to America. We have not forgotten you, and we hope you have not forgotten us. It is our greatest desire to live in peace and friendship with you." Whereupon, the audience signified its "Amen" by rising to sing the Polish equivalent of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." The intensity of the singing, the outstretched hands which reached for mine as we passed to the exit betrayed the depth of feeling. Many in the back deserted the meeting for a last peek through our car windows, and stood waving good-bye as we headed back toward Cracow.

GEORGE SHERMAN

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BOOKS & COMMENT

Gertrude Stein and the Nay-Sayers

by Gilbert A. Harrison

MISS SPRIGGE'S biography of Gertrude Stein has 265 pages and a list of grateful acknowledgements as long as the Boulevard Raspail. It contains 27 photographs, some of which have not been previously published (including a haunting picture taken by Cecil Beaton shortly before Miss Stein's death). About one-third of the book is made up of quotations from Miss Stein's own account of herself. It all reads easily, and for those who know little of Gertrude Stein's "life and work," Miss Sprigge's assembly of parts may be interesting.

But I wonder why she wrote it. She had never met Gertrude Stein. She does not appear to feel strongly about her subject—either way; the book is neither sweet nor sour. She does not lead us to any greater appreciation of the more difficult Stein texts. She is concerned with little more than the autobiographical writings, and when she does come to one of Miss Stein's major but not easy works, *The Making of Americans*, she says she doesn't understand why it "had to be so long."

Gertrude Stein, Her Life and Work, by Elizabeth Sprigge (Harper; $5).

If it were true, as the *Times Literary Supplement* says, that Miss Sprigge's biography is "full and accurate," the mystery of why she picked this particular subject would not much matter. The book, unfortunately, is neither full nor accurate. Toward the end it's downright skimpy. And as for accuracy, although I'm only a lay brother in the Stein order and have not undertaken the research required of a biographer, even I know that Miss Stein was born on February 3 and thus did not "share" George Washington's birthday. And if Miss Sprigge is "accurate" in saying that Gertrude Stein "became one of the first stream-of-consciousness novelists," then Dashiell Hammett wrote *Little Women*. Even more misleading is the assertion that Miss Stein knit for soldiers. Gertrude Stein did a great many things but she didn't knit—or cook—for anybody. Alice Toklas did that. Nor had Gertrude Stein and Picasso "grown far part" after World War II. Nor did Miss Stein die from "an advanced stage of cancer" (it was calcification of the uturus). Nor were her funeral services held in the "American church" in Paris.

I don't want to overdo it. Miss Sprigge does tell us many things we hadn't known before, her writing is pleasant and her reporting (not judgment, she gives us no judgment) is not unintelligent. Having said that I can think of nothing more worth saying about her book. There's a great deal to be said, however, about the book's reception.

For if Miss Sprigge has no point of view about her subject, the reviewers do. "Self-evident monstrosities," says the *Times Literary Supplement* (February 8, 1957) of Miss Stein's work. She is "the fool who persisted in his folly and did not become wise"; that she should have been published by the Yale University Press "is an astonishing monument to academic gullibility." And finally, says the *Times*,

> she also—and to forget this fact is to render the whole Stein theory incomprehensible—had a private income; what wonder that painters would praise the certainly experimental and doubtless remarkable writings (in a foreign language) of this splendid expatriate who not only understood perfectly what they themselves were up to but, what is more, *was prepared to pay good money for it.* (Italics mine).

Miss Stein did have a "private income," though it was modest. But which painters praised her writings? Most of them knew no English, and she wrote in no other language. She didn't pay "good money" for the Picassos and Matisses and Juan Gris because they had very little market value when she bought them. It's all in the anecdote Miss Stein tells of the day

> a rich collector came to my house and he looked at the [Picasso] portrait and he wanted to know how much I had paid for it. Nothing I said to him, nothing he cried out, nothing I answered, naturally he gave it to me. Some days after I told this to Picasso, he smiled, he doesn't understand, he said, that at that time the difference between a sale and a gift was negligible.

"Private income?" What has that to do with her work? Unless you belong to the Mike Gold school of literary criticism:

> To Gertrude Stein and to the other artists like her, art exists in the vacuum of a private income. . . . The literary idiocy of Gertrude Stein only reflects the madness of the whole system of capitalist values. It is part of the signs of doom that are written largely everywhere on the walls of bourgeois society. [*Change the World*, by Michael Gold, 1936]

WHAT explains the critics' fury? Iain Hamilton who reviews Miss Sprigge's biography for *The Spectator* is indignant that Miss Stein should have "taken in" so many presumably sane people—that is, H. G. Wells, Sherwood Anderson, Edith Sitwell, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Thornton Wilder, Clare Luce (!) "In every toppled reputation," says *The Spectator*, "there is an awful warning, and the broken stones of this one spell out catastrophe itself in a variety of dialects." Out of the catastrophe, *The Spectator* plucks one small redeeming thought: Miss Stein might have been a good painter, or, "failing that, she might have made herself a good art critic." An art critic? She couldn't draw and didn't care to; painting was her pleasure, not her problem. And when the editors of *The Little Review* asked her in 1929, "What is your attitude toward art today," she replied, "I like to look at it." (If you're looking for contrast, there is Aldous Huxley's reply to the same question: "I profoundly disapprove of the tendencies of a great deal of modern art. The trend away from the human and the organic toward the geometrical and mechanical seems to me horrible and also for all the superficial brilliancy of

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the art in question, extremely unintelligent.")

It's too bad. Neither Miss Sprigge in her detachment nor the *Times* or *Spectator* in their rage tells us what we want to know: Why was Gertrude Stein so influential? The fact that she knew a good painting when she saw one (and before others recognized its merit) is irrelevant. Her hold on writers was strong, it persisted, and it was felt by many who had not even read her; or if they had, had done so only casually. What did she do for them? She had no "in" with publishers; she had a hard enough time getting her own things printed, doing it on her own in the early days and with Miss Toklas' help. Why should Hemingway thus end his letter to her in 1924: "It used to be easy before I met you. I certainly was bad, gosh, I'm awfully bad now but it's a different kind of bad." Or why would F. Scott Fitzgerald say that he was "content to let you, and the one or two others like you who are acutely sensitive, think or fail to think for me and my kind artistically"? Or tell her after their final meeting, in 1934:

> I was somewhat stupid-got with the Christmas spirit, but I enjoyed the one idea you *did* develop and, like everything else you say, it will sing in my ears long after everything else about that afternoon is dust and ashes. You were the same fine fire to everyone who sat upon your hearth—for it was your hearth because you carry home with you wherever you are—a home before which we have all always warmed ourselves.

Why did Sherwood Anderson tell her that she always managed "to say so much and say it straighter than anyone else I know"? Or Marianne Moore write that "the reading of *The Making of Americans* was one of the most eager and enriching experiences that I have ever had?"

BEWITCHED? The whole crew? Apparently so, but why? It was because there was a ruthless rightness about her judgments concerning creativity. She was exceptionally alert, she did not talk or write to please others, what she knew she *knew*. She enjoyed praise, she saw the joke, but she never stooped to conquer. She talked to younger writers as if she were the Lord Himself, and they listened because she was demanding uncompromising disregard of the demands of the audience. She asked them to see "things as they are." She did not tell them what or how to write, saying in *The Autobiography of Alice Toklas* that she would never bother correcting "any detail of anybody's writing,

> she sticks strictly to general principles, the way of seeing what the writer chooses to see, and the relation between that vision and the way it gets down. When the vision is not complete the words are flat, it is very simple.

But that simplicity was the result of intense concentration. She meditated about how we know whatever we know, she thought about time and how all that changes from generation to generation and from place to place is the externals and our way of looking at them. She used words as if they were alive, exploring them singly and in relation to each other, regarding them as if they had been born this instant. She had no use for hand-me-downs: the present was her preoccupation. The force of her vision knocked pretensions flat. "Remarks," she told Hemingway, "are not literature." She went to the bottom of writers' problems. "Now, *listen*," she would say. And they listened. She enjoyed it immensely, and in her case "the reward of difficult thinking," Thorton Wilder noted, was "an inner exhilaration—

> delight in words and in the virtuosity of using them exactly; here is mockery at the predecessors who approached these matters with so cumbrous a solemnity.

She was opinionated and wrong as could be about politics, believing that FDR wouldn't be elected to a second term, or that World War II wouldn't happen. But neither politics nor painting was her profession. She loved France, but as a place to work in, not as home. America was her country and the GI's of World War II with whom she talked endlessly made her "come all over patriotic." Her last book, *Brewsie and Willie* was addressed to them:

> You just have to find a new way, you have to find out how you can go ahead without running away with yourselves . . . you have to learn to be individual **and not just mass job workers, you have to get courage enough to know what you feel and not just all be yes or no men.**

Miss Sprigge's book has given the critics a chance to dress up. Miss Stein took note of them in 1934 when she addressed a women's club in Paris and a lady present accused her of sensationalism. "People today," she replied,

> like contemporary comforts, but they take their literature and art from the past. They are not interested in what the present generation is thinking or painting or doing if it doesn't fit the enclosure of their personal comprehension. Present day geniuses can no more help doing what they are doing than you can help not understanding it, but if you think we do it for effect, and to make a sensation, you're crazy.

Three-Syllable Sonnet

"What are you over here on?"—*a question asked of any semi-literate American by any other American almost anywhere in Europe.*

THOSE Fulbright
and those Gug-
genheim Fel-
lows one meets
left and right
all of them
here on some-
thing good—well,

perhaps not
to be on's
a poor show;
all I know—
with them on,
better off.

WILLIAM JAY SMITH

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A Comedy of Eros

by Donald Malcolm

WHEN AN eminent Harvard sociologist momentarily deserts his lugubrious occupation to produce a satire worthy of Swift, it ought to be an occasion for general rejoicing. As yet, however, there has been a remarkable dearth of street dancing. Not only have the reviewers been slow to recognize and salute this small masterpiece, but—strangely—the book's own publishers have seen fit to promote it as if it were an ordinary work of scholarship.

The American Sex Revolution, by Pitirim Sorokin (Porter Sargent; $3.50).

Whatever the publishers may think about the matter, this book is a comedy. Could any scientist, after all, soberly declare prudery to be the measure of all civilizations; asserting, for instance, that Greece and Rome lapsed into decadance when the nude statue made its appearance? Could anyone with eyes, scientist or not, declare that contemporary painting and sculpture are moving toward "a naked, more sensuous representation of the human body"? Could anyone seriously argue that sexual immorality:

> . . . has already brought two world wars and many smaller conflicts; the gigantic Russian revolution and a host of lesser wars . . . ?

The intent is clearly satirical.

Beyond this, however, Professor Sorokin has created an exciting new technique for sociologists. For he has penetrated to the core of a certain social type—call it The Prude for want of a better name—and, assuming the voice of this creature, he gradually lays bare the inner workings of its peculiar mentality. He gives us, for instance, an almost suffocating sense of the temptations which press upon this sensitive and unfortunate person from every side.

Temptations to the right of him:

> In the popular press, we meet an endless variety of the most alluring advertisements of girdles and corsets . . .

Temptations to the left of him:

> If in abstract painting and sculpture sex is not rendered visually, it is often explicit in the name given by the artist to his design or contraption.

Volley and thunder:

> Thus, whatever aspect of our culture is considered, each is packed with sex obsession. Its vast totality bombards us continuously, from cradle to grave. If we escape from being stirred by obscene literature, we may be aroused by the crooners, or by the new psychology and sociology, or by the teachings of the Freudianized pseudo-religions, or by radio-television entertainment. We are completely surrounded by the rising tide of sex which is flooding every compartment of our culture, every section of our social life.

Naturally The Prude protests against the theories of Freud, chiefly because "they drag into filthy sewers almost all the great values of humanity," but also because they are "utterly unscientific." By way of vivid contrast to Freud's slipshod methodology, we may observe The Prude's own claim that the principal cause of neuroses and functional psychoses is overdeveloped sexuality. Or his firm belief that most transgressors of the moral code pay a horrible price in "anguish, anxiety, fear, remorse, hate and pain." To which he adds, with evident and rather frightening relish:

> Frequently the evanescent sex pleasure wrecks their whole life. In many countries adulterers and fornicators have even been punished by death, mutilation, torture, dishonor, or imprisonment.

These few quotations will give, I hope, some faint idea of the scope of Dr. Sorokin's satire and the depth of his insight into the nature of extreme Puritanism. It is possible, of course, that I have misinterpreted *The American Sex Revolution,* and that Dr. Sorokin actually holds the opinions expressed therein, but I don't want to be the one to accuse him of it. In any case, viewing the book as high social comedy, it hardly matters one way or the other. *Ten Nights in a Barroom* wasn't meant to be funny either.

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THEATRE

A One-Man Dialogue on the Barrault Repertory

JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT with his actors' company (one of the most celebrated repertory theatrical groups in France) has recently completed a brief New York season. The performances included not only works written originally in French, but also French translations and adaptations of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* and Lope de Vega's *Dog in the Manger*. Mr. Bentley here presents a discussion of the company's productions.

A. . . . Even the choice of plays for the New York visit was not the happiest. The only masterpiece on the list—*The Misanthrope*—is pure dialogue and, as such, accessible only to those who respond to every nuance of the French—

B. The *only* masterpiece?

A. *Volpone* was a masterpiece till Zweig and Romains got hold of it. This French version—

B. But all translations—

A. They didn't have to do translations. In any case, this isn't one. Romains was quoted in a press-release as saying that it was left to the modern playwright to complete what Ben Jonson had merely begun. Zweig and Romains ruined *Volpone* by presuming to try and improve on it.

B. Yet you enjoyed the movie.

A. It was a good movie; and I take the word to be less important in movies than in theatre. Certainly, one was able to accept it on its own terms, and one of the chief holes in the script was filled by the awesome presence of Louis Jouvet.

B. The character of Mosca a hole?

A. In the modern version, yes. At any rate he is unintelligible. The adaptors seem forever on the brink of releasing some secret about him. It was Jouvet's achievement to conceal the fact that they had no secret to release. His Mosca always seemed to be having his own thoughts, and even misgivings, though actually all that was involved was that Zweig and Romains couldn't take Ben Jonson's moral severity. They wished to be sophisticated and replace the accusing finger by a shrug of the shoulders. Though the worser villain, Volpone, is bundled off into beggary, the lesser one, Mosca, remains to enjoy a perpetual carnival! This surely is Viennese whipped cream, not the full Mermaid wine, Parisian pinchbeck, not Jonsonian gold—

B. One of Romains' own plays would have made a much better choice, to be sure. But contemporary French drama *was* represented—with *Nights of Wrath*. Salacrou's arrival on Broadway is overdue.

A. They should have done his *Unknown Woman of Arras*—earlier Salacrou but less dated. *Nights of Wrath*, after all, is standard Front Populaire melodrama—with the hero, *of course*, on our side, and the coward, *of course*, dickering with the enemy.

B. Why not say it is a play about a brave man and a coward? And surely there is drama in the fact that two seemingly "grey" average men turn out, in a crisis, to be, respectively white and black? One can't extend one's disapproval of fellow-traveling into a veto on all political plays of the familiar pattern. Besides, that pattern is not the main thing here. The little scene between husband and wife, when they try to face the appalling fact of having a violent *résistant* in their house, is exquisite macabre comedy. . . .

A. One little scene, yes. But in many big scenes, Salacrou is lost in a fog of Germanic Expressionism. Actors step to the footlights and appeal oracularly to the gallery. Lights flash unexpectedly on and not so unexpectedly off. Barrault gets his modern political hero mixed up with the ghost in *Hamlet*: look where he strides!—

B. A greater contemporary was also represented: Claudel.

A. A greater lyric poet, but hardly any sort of dramatist. The absence of poetry from the modern stage in general enables every poet who tries the drama to get much more credit than he deserves. Eliot is one example, and Claudel is another. And Barrault chose perhaps the worst of all the latter's plays: *Christopher Columbus*. As a compliment to America, naturally. I don't suppose Spanish-Americans have ever been paid such a compliment before, as Claudel assumes that it was the Aztecs who behaved barbarically to the Spaniards and not vice versa. The master idea of the play—that Columbus' motive for exploration was religious in general and Catholic in particular—is not only inaccurate but ridiculous. It also has no drama in it, as witness the silly scene between Columbus and his men when, in effect, he tells them not to worry about starving to death as, several centuries later, there'll be a Cardinal Spellman.

B. The form is interesting.

A. The form, again, is Germanic, and Expressionistic. Yes: and dated. Cinematic interludes—the orchestra wandering across the stage—spoken choruses—sung choruses—bare stage—Rodgers and Hammerstein did it all in a musical.

B. Is that bad?

A. These things were interesting as novelties, and now the novelty has worn off.

• • •

B. I enjoyed the show—not because this or that device was used—I enjoyed the actors—

A. Let's finish, first, with the writers.

B. You will tolerate Lope de Vega?

A. Gladly. But "George Neveux, *after* Lope de Vega" is another matter. And that is how the author of *Dog in the Manger* is billed. This was Lope romanticized, modernized, Gallicized.

B. Lope's play presents problems.

A. Which were not solved but sidestepped. It seems to me that the interesting things in Lope are precisely the baffling and outrageous things which in this production have been removed. Particularly outrageous are classic Spanish morals. The heroine of this play proposes dropping the hero's servant down a well once he has served his turn; and the hero makes no comment. Such are classic Spanish morals. The passage, of course, has been cut by M. Neveux. He has softened Lope more than Zweig and Romains softened Jonson. Even the main plot is not left intact: Lope's hero plays fast and loose with a girl that loves him, whereas M. Neveux' girl does not love him, so our feelings aren't hurt at the treatment she gets, and again—

B. I had the time of my life.

A. You liked the acting.

B. It is time to speak of that. But

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that is not all I mean. Though I agree that Lope's play, performed in its integrity, would be outrageous, I am not sure it would be enjoyable. Audiences—unlike some readers—do not like being baffled; and if a director has been baffled by a script, it is hard to believe he will put anything on stage but incoherence. Granted that something is lost whenever you "adapt," this is a script that would never reach the boards unadapted. I agree that the result was utterly French. But even faithful translations become utterly French when staged by Frenchmen. If by temperament, my dear A, you are a purist, you would undoubtedly be happier away from the theatre.

A. The commercial theatre—

B. Any theatre. Lope's for instance. No man committed himself more wholeheartedly to the impurity of theatre than Lope. He would gladly have made his two thousand and first play out of Neveux' adaptation of *Dog in a Manger.*

• • •

A. Let me attack one more play on M. Barrault's list: Giradoux' *Intermezzo.*

B. Is *that* Germanic and Expressionistic?

A. It certainly has some of the faults of German Expressionism: when we think we have to do with persons, we find we have principles on our hands. The character of Isabelle is nice as an idea, but turns out to be *merely* an idea. And the chief "dramatic situation" of the play is her choosing between two other ideas—also parading as characters.

B. True character, surely, is achieved in certain scenes. I find the Supervisor a well-defined character—

A. Certain scenes. One character. Such achievements only make matters worse; for, instead of being consistently abstract and allegorical, the play wobbles disastrously between two modes, two worlds.

B. That would not be so if the role of Isabelle were rightly cast.

A. Then why is the role *never* rightly cast? I have seen the play in French, English, and Italian, and each time saw Isabelle "miscast." I conclude there is something wrong with the role itself: namely, that, though the idea is clear and sounds theatrical, the lines and situations do not permit an actress actually to give it theatrical expression.

B. I found the Barrault production successful wherever the individual actor showed sufficient talent: Barrault as the ghost, Desailly as the Supervisor, Bertin as the Inspector. . .

A. As we are now discussing performance, let me say that the weakness of the Barrault ensemble, as an ensemble, was nowhere more apparent than in *Intermezzo.* There simply weren't enough good actors to go around. The Mayor and the Druggist would have been much better played by a dozen American actors I could mention.

B. You must concede the method of repertory: which is to give everyone a chance. The star sometimes takes a smaller role, the supporting actor a larger one . . .

A. With calamitous consequences. Mlle. Valère is little more than a well-trained pupil; she has neither the radiance nor the talent for a leading role And though there must be leading roles which M. Bertin could play to perfection, Volpone is not one of them. He lacks the violence, the crude sexuality, the vulgarity. Nor was M. Desailly able, like Jouvet in the film, to make the modern Mosca interesting.

B. But then, most of the leads were played by M. Barrault and Mme. Renaud.

A. If only that thought were more reassuring! But M. Barrault is an unorthodox actor rather than a great one. Sometimes, as in his Hamlet of the last visit, he is, more than anything else, eccentric. Other times—in straight roles, as in movies and the modern, more realistic plays—he is straightforward but negative almost to the point of dullness. He is cold, and he is unspontaneous; as a result, you never sense a live relationship between him and another actor, for live relationships are warm, and—

B. Now you go too far. And, in fact, your whole analysis seems rather that of a prosecutor than a critic: you have listed all possible grounds of complaint to the total exclusion of everything else. To start where you ended—

A. Where I was interrupted.

B. I grant a high degree of idiosyncrasy in M. Barrault, a coolness of temper, and a limitation in range. But within his limits, he is superb—and his best parts in the present repertoire do not require him to transcend those limits. The word *cool* is misleading. Though I don't care for M. Barrault's way with the tender emotions—he merely descants on them—he can render the heat of Alceste's irascibility admirably and make you realize to what an extent Molière was presenting the traditional Choleric Man, though in the untraditional character of an intellectual. It remains possible to find something noble and heroic in Alceste, as Eliante puts it, precisely because he makes his mistakes, not in chill, calculating, Pharisaic pride, but in transports of rage.

A. He is also supposed to feel tender emotion for Célimène.

B. You wisely say: supposed to. How tender the emotion really is I don't know. Barrault did contrive to suggest a tenderness at moments—squeezed in, as it were, between the lines. And isn't that all the text would justify? The words themselves are chiefly railing, which is Célimène's just complaint. The erotic undercurrent in that railing is something Barrault *was* able to suggest. The particular kind of love scene which is Act Four, Scene Three, *was* his kind of thing, for the tenderness is held at arm's length, while the emotions in the center are such as he can fully express: fury, bafflement, suspicion, woundedness, forlornness . . I don't recall any other production in which this scene became, as it should, a full emotional climax.

A. Barrault is not one of the great Alcestes. At the outset, it is not the melancholy *homme aux rubans verts* one sees, it is a famous mime and mannikin who proceeds to jump a foot in the air to show he is angry.

B. That leap is almost the only "eccentricity" of a performance remarkable for its seriousness and restraint, a performance, too, in which Barrault does what you say he cannot do—

A. I deny it.

B. Namely, enacts a live relationship with a partner. Critics have said what a stroke of genius it was to confront a "misanthrope" with a coquette. The confrontation of M. Barrault with Mme. Renaud—whom, by the way, you have studiously avoided mentioning—is a phenomenon scarcely less felicitous.

• • •

A. Madeleine Renaud is a different matter.

B. Exactly. And the difference constitutes a polarity that animates that whole magnetic field which is the stage. Their qualities are complementary: the one cool, if you will, the other warm, the

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one reserved, self-contained, making people, as it were, come to him, the other frank, dependent, going to people to help or to be helped.

A. You mean he is a man and she is a woman.

B. I mean they give to maleness and femaleness, and the polar relation between them, theatrical expression. I mean that, in works with Mme. Renaud, M. Barrault's limitation is no disadvantage. On the contrary, it serves to give his acting sharper definition. And what he does not have is supplied by her. To see such a partnership is one of the rarest pleasures of theatre-going. And there is no substitute for it. For while such a pair may "simply be interpreting" the lines of Molière the life of their relationship as it exists on stage cannot be found in the book.

A. I've said nothing against *The Misanthrope* except that you'd have to know French to follow it.

B. But *Dog in the Manger* was also "carried" by the great partnership. You see the aim of Neveux as being to ruin Lope. I see it as being to provide great scenes for Barrault and Renaud—a high enough ideal for any playwright. What is more delightful than the sense of a current flowing between two actors, now in a trickle, now in flood, and never the same for two seconds together? The Lunts have given us such experiences. But I suppose no actors who came together just for three weeks' rehearsal could ever do it. Necessary, perhaps, is a subtlety of relationship, as established offstage, and then, on top of it, the greatest power to externalize and project that subtlety on stage. The matter deserves looking into, for, while the great actors have been given a good deal of study, the great partners have scarcely been identified . . .

• • •

B. You proceed from the defense of two individuals to a general speculation in theatre history! Let me sum up my own position in a single statement: if one had hoped to be astonished by the Barrault visit, if one had hoped for a revelation of greatness or novelty such as the Berliner Ensemble has been providing all over Europe, one cannot but profess oneself disappointed.

A. The company is in a position comparable to that of a little magazine some years after its inception. The contributors are no longer breathless with things they have been saving up to say. What they say is now familiar, because they have said it. So they go out of business. Or become big business. Barrault has become big business.

B. That is what is wrong. He stands for nothing any more. When he wants to give his audiences something a little daring and novel, what does he do? He revives something he did before the war—such as his pantomimic representation of a horse! That the latter was also the best single item in the whole New York repertory is the clearest proof of M. Barrault's spiritual bankruptcy.

A. I see that some of the facts lend themselves to your interpretation, but I don't know what alternative Barrault had, or whether your terms—"standing for something," being "daring" and "novel"—really embrace the reality of the situation. Are you really saying more than that Barrault has grown older? Surely the new "daring" and "novelty," the new "standing for something," will have to come from those who are now where Barrault was twenty years ago? Or do you expect art to be progressive?

B. I don't expect at all. I report.

A. No. Your reporting is wholly dictated by expectation—disappointed expectation. I can make better claim to be a reporter because I am grateful for what I see—in proportion, that is, as it gives me pleasure. For example, *Christopher Columbus*. The script may be inane as you say; the entertainment was entrancing. Take as small an example as the representation of waves by means of a rope across the stage which someone in the wings cracks like a whip. That has the combined subtlety and simplicity of jiu jitsu. One isn't accustomed to such ingenuities. One is startled, thrilled, enchanted.

B. Then *you* go by expectation too: your expectation that this would be just another Broadway show. And you overpraise it because it isn't.

A. Some kind of touchstone is indispensable. I find mine were more legitimate than yours. For isn't the point precisely that the Barraults show us a kind of work our theatre lamentably lacks?

B. You are about to preach a sermon in favor of repertory.

A. Yes—if repertory entails all that the Barraults bring us: the sense of dedication and *esprit de corps,* for instance, with which the actors in *Christopher Columbus* went to their acting, their songs, their pantomimes. It did seem to me notably preferable to the craftily imposed zest which, say, our musical comedy actors are taught to bring on stage. Some people were surprised that their productions were not more sophisticated—

B. The lighting never worked right. The scenery was not only lightweight but, at times, inadequate to so large a theatre, dingy. Many scenes had a loose, improvised quality, as if the actors were free to move as they wished.

• • •

A. To me it is a relief to get away, for once, from our chrome-plated supershowmanship. In the Barraults' work, the relation between a modern performance and, say, some of the old Spanish or Italian actors on a platform in an inn-yard was still visible. And within that unsophistication, more virtuosity than you have let me mention in this discussion. *Madam's Late Mother,* for example, which was on the same bill with the Salacrou, is a very great farce and received masterly treatment not only from Mme. Renaud, who is capable of any feminine characterization from the most noble to the most vulgar, but from a supporting player of superlative talent whom you also have not mentioned: M. Beauchamp. I overheard the comment that this farce, while wholly successful with the public, was slowly paced. *Slowly-paced yet successful:* if the Broadway approach to farce is right, how would that be possible? I do not think any merely technical explanation will suffice, unless one include under the heading of technique the fact of training and working together for years on end. This, so to say, spiritual fact of the group's togetherness amply compensates for the individual flaws you have mentioned.

B. But you can't *see* their togetherness. You can't *see* their spirit.

A. That perhaps is the fundamental issue between us—a quasi-theological one. I believe God is visible in his works; you do not.

B. So it's a real sermon you're going to preach me. Not about repertory but about God.

A. It's a real sermon I'm going to preach you. Not about repertory but about community.

ERIC BENTLEY

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Correspondence

(*Continued from page 3*)

graphs, Bestor rediscovers the conspiracy of his mortal, mythical enemy, the "Educationists." This time the conspiracy is really treasonable, *i.e.*, the "educationists" have been considering the gifted child as atypical; they have been listing him with the retarded, the crippled, and others. . . .

Next, ignoring the painful, psychological problems of evaluating the nature of intelligence, he states blandly: "One characteristic of the brilliant mind is that it learns quickly." Does it? Always? Like the minds of Darwin, Edison and Emerson to name just a few slow and average learners?

Bestor next repeats an old educational cliché, that is, that our enrichment programs for the gifted are inadequate. So they are. But how would Dr. Bestor enrich them? Does he really have a program for the gifted child or is he just like the rest of us, just very concerned?

Writing on *Controlling the Curriculum,* Bestor inserts such gems as, "local school boards not state bureaus should decide whether a potential teacher is qualified. . . ." Has Bestor heard of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey and innumerable other states where local boards choose teachers? If Bestor means, and I'm sure he does, that local boards not state boards should set qualification standards, he is taking a curious course for one continually flaying anti-intellectualism in the public school systems. Knowing what we do about provincialism, corruption and economic controls on the local level, he is again on a strange road.

E. W. ROBERTS
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

" . . . please omit my name"

ARTHUR BESTOR certainly struck a responsive chord in me. I graduated from a Midwestern high school in the 1930's and was well-prepared for the Eastern college which I entered on a scholarship. Later I received a fellowship for graduate work, and after getting my master's degree, I completed a portion of work on a doctorate.

During and after World War II a shortage of college instructors in my field developed, and I taught in two colleges for almost four years, resigning a few weeks before the birth of our first child. When my husband returned to civilian life, we moved to a small Midwestern city near his business. I settled into the usual routine of a housewife and mother of three.

An AAUW study-group experience inspired me to seek out the teacher-training college in our town. There was no possibility of completing work for a Ph.D., and even if I had, local employment opportunities are limited. I was accepted as a graduate student and have been going to evening and Saturday classes for three years.

These classmates have been a revelation to me. Most are graduates of the local institution. They speak and write ungrammatically, can't spell, plagiarize blithely, and display horrifying ignorance. "Who's this Charlemagne guy he was talking about?" They are incredibly grade conscious, for they must make a B average to get their M.A. and an automatic pay increase. There is no need for them to worry, however, for everybody who registers for a class and takes the final gets at least a B.

Now I have completed the required "graduate level" courses on my program and am taking undergraduate courses needed for state certification as a teacher. If I hadn't already invested so much time, I would quit. I am spending an hour each week observing at the laboratory school connected with the college—to get over my "normal fear of children." It is a most frustrating experience watching incompetent student teachers hand out misinformation as other bored student teachers await their turn.

I will have to spend 200 hours next year as a student teacher myself. I protested and was told that (a) if my course program had not been accepted several years ago, the new requirement of 320 hours in unpaid practice would hold for me; (b) teachers who have taught for some years in other states which had "lower certification standards" are required to spend 320 hours in unpaid practice teaching and many more hours in other required courses; and (c) if I weren't quiet, they might increase my requirements. Yet all the educationists give lip service to the pedagogical theory of accepting the student at his current level of achievement and progressing from there.

I am convinced that the taxpayers who support our public schools are completely unaware of the stranglehold the educationists have on the schools. So many people of all types of educational backgrounds have asked why I was going to school, when I had had college teaching experience supplemented by church work with youth groups of high-school age. Why didn't I just start teaching again? The universal reaction to my explanation that I had to take courses in how to teach was "No wonder there's a teacher shortage!"

If this is published, please omit my name and address. I'm already a marked woman, and unless I can get into public school teaching, how can I improve it?

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NEW REPUBLIC
1244 NINETEENTH ST., N.W., WASH. 6, D. C.

301 N ST., N. E., WASHINGTON 2, D. C.
PRINTED BY NATIONAL PUBLISHING CO.

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